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sense? Nothing, — unless this can be said, that, if they wish to be considered as having any honesty at all, they must submit to be looked upon as, during the past four years, having had neither knowledge nor foresight.

23. — *Life of Marcus Tullius Cicero*. By WILLIAM FORSYTH, M. A., Q. C. New York: Charles Scribner and Company. 1865. 2 vols. Sm. 8vo. pp. 364, 341.

THESE two volumes undertake to supply a want that has long been felt by the English-speaking world. There has never been in English an absolutely good life of the great Roman, and for nearly a century there has been no life which was at all acceptable to English scholarship. The researches into Roman history and antiquities so diligently prosecuted during the last hundred years have given us a better knowledge of many things before hidden in complete darkness or lying in doubtful light. But the information thus obtained, so far as it affected our knowledge of Cicero's character, can hardly be said to have been made easily accessible, being either scattered through various reviews, or gathered into articles in Cyclopædias, or to be picked out from the pages of historical works.

Middleton's Cicero has long since been consigned to the list of books which no gentleman's library can do without, and which still less can do without the sort of gentleman's library referred to in the jest. It has fallen under the severe condemnation of the critics, both for its own shortcomings and for the faults and errors of Middleton himself. Nothing is spared. One writer is able to find in it nothing that is good, whether its matter or its manner be looked at. Of the style he says that it is essentially bad: "by weeding away from it whatever is colloquial, you would strip it of all that is characteristic; removing its idiomatic vulgarisms, you would remove its principle of animation."

Certainly Middleton's style is so far from being exact or elegant, as to be always quite unstudied, and sometimes even slovenly. Yet though somewhat involved, it is generally easy, agreeable in its narrative flow, and perspicuous; fully justifying the praise of Gray, a critic perhaps too fastidious, who could say of Middleton, "Though I cannot approve the spirit of his books, methinks 't is a pity the world should lose so rare a thing as a good writer." The spirit alluded to by the poet as having displayed itself in Middleton's polemical writings has been made the foundation of a very grave charge against his *Life of Cicero*, — namely, that he so depicted Cicero's character as to make him appear a man of pure and scrupulous morality, a model of integrity and up-

rightness, "to which Christianity could have added no element of value." This allegation could never have been proved, and probably was not suggested by the book itself. We indeed find him given up to that blind idolatry of his subject which constitutes the standing charge against almost all biographers. His zeal is made the more fanatical because he was in dense ignorance of the real point at issue in that tremendous conflict between Cæsar and Pompey, which forms by far the most interesting period of Cicero's life. To him Cicero was not a partisan, but a true patriot. And he was the more ready to take Cicero's view of the contest, because, as he shows throughout his book, he had an awful deference for the mighty Roman names, and an uneasy fear that it was presumptuous in a broad-skirted, bewigged Briton of George the Second's time to sit alone in judgment on the Senators of Rome. Adopting Cicero's likes and dislikes, his judgments of men and affairs are never fearless and impartial. With a false idea of Cicero's times, taking Cicero's account of himself as well as of other men, it is not much to be wondered at if Middleton's biography is panegyric.

But the defence of Middleton may be based upon another consideration upon which, as it assists us to gain a clearer view of Cicero himself, we shall dwell at some length. More than most men, he lived a double life. Every man's experience teaches him how wide a difference exists, sometimes for better, sometimes for worse, between the valuation which he puts upon himself and that which the world sets upon him. His character, as portrayed to the world by his actions, is a reality; but his character, as he himself reads it in his thoughts and feelings and aspirations, is also a reality, and it often is to him the nearest and most tangible of all real things, and the one in whose existence he most believes.

When we note in the record of Cicero's actions the many so unworthy in themselves, so little consonant with the noble and beautiful nature revealed in his writings, — when we see his mean concessions to a corrupt party, his sacrifices of justice to personal friendship or political ambition, his truckling to base men, his irresolution, his double-dealing and vanity, — we with difficulty avoid holding him in contempt, and wonder how so great a man could fall so far short of the standard which his own hands had set up for himself. But sensitive, imaginative, and given to self-contemplation, the busy life of the senate and the forum never weaned Cicero from his favorite pursuits, and never could have seemed to him so truly his life as those hours of happy leisure when, escaped from the temptations of ambitious Rome, having put off from the real man which he felt himself to be, that outside man which apparently he was, he lived his true life; — was the sage, revolving schemes for his

country's good ; the philosopher, pondering sweet and solemn thoughts ; the instructor of his countrymen in that noble ethical system which seems to declare the whole law of conscience, and to want nothing but that power of conscience which, born of the hopes and fears breathed into the soul of man by revelation, supports and strengthens our moral systems. And moreover his ideal, not, as with the mass of men, floating vaguely in the mind, but reduced to shape and consistency by laborious thought, thus lovingly labored over, became to his own eyes more and more his very self. The Cicero who wrote disgraceful letters to Cœlius and Dolabella, who defended Gabinius at the behest of Pompey, who opened his brother's correspondence, who was a coward in his exile, formed but a small and insignificant part of the true Cicero, who so warmly admired and loved everything great and generous and good, who felt himself fired with the divine spark of genius.

Judging him by his treatises and orations alone, the world might have held of Cicero his own opinion of himself. But the world was disabused. In the familiar letters it found the material for reaching more correct conclusions. But these letters no more than the acts and thoughts which they recorded could undeceive their writer, and until recently the majority of writers have taken his own view of his character, and Middleton is by no means the only biographer whose praises of Cicero are eulogistic and devoid of discrimination.

It may be proper to mention here Abeken's "*Cicero in seinen Briefen*," a work better described by its German title than by that which Mr. Merivale has prefixed to the English translation which he edited. For it is not so much "*An Account of the Life and Times of Cicero*," as it is a painstaking and accurate commentary on the familiar epistles. We believe that this valuable translation has never been republished in America. The original work, designed for the use of instructors of youth, while it is admirably adapted to answer the end proposed, and eminently just in its opinions, is yet a dry and unentertaining work.

Of Mr. Forsyth as a biographer, we may say that to the meritorious part of Middleton's work he has joined all of Abeken's fit for transfer into a popular biography, and has added of his own some interesting and valuable reports of all the cases in which Cicero appeared as an advocate and where there is still remaining any part of his argument. In manner he has the advantage of his German predecessor. His style, without being in the least raised or ornamented, yet merits the praise of being free from affectation of any sort ; and the language is just such plain, sensible English as one gentleman of good education might write to another about the crops, the weather, home politics, and the news from abroad. The author objects to Middleton's work, that it is too

much taken up with a history of Cicero's times, and says that the charm of biography consists in the faithfulness with which domestic details and little traits of personal character are presented. If this be so, it is not for their charm, then, that the world demands biographies of its great men. Cicero was an orator, a philosopher, and a statesman of Rome at the epoch when Roman history was most interesting; and it is these aspects of the man that biography should mainly describe. Let trivial details be admitted only on condition that their presence excludes nothing more important. English literature, which had so long been content with Middleton's Life of Cicero, may for an equal period be satisfied with this work of Mr. Forsyth's. But there is yet room for a comprehensive biography of the great Roman, written by a man of genius and historical insight.

We believe that there is not one typographical error in all the seven hundred pages of this work. The index would have been better if it had been made very much more copious. The outward appearance of the volumes leaves nothing to be desired.

24. — *Collection De Vries. A Series of French, German, Italian, and Spanish College Text-Books, comprising Tales, Novelettes, Comedies, Poetry, etc.* Boston. 1864, 1865. 12mo.

THIS collection, which now embraces more than fifty separate publications, is of great excellence, both as regards the selection of the works comprised in it and the form in which they appear. Each number of the series is for sale separately, and of many of the numbers there are two editions, one with notes to assist beginners in the languages, and one of the text alone for advanced readers.

In the German series we have Hans Andersen's delightful *Bilderbuch ohne Bilder*, one of the works most characteristic of his pleasant genius; Tieck's story of *Die Elfen*, and his little drama *Das Rothkäppchen*; two amusing comedies by Pultitz; two of Paul Heyse's excellent stories; Herman Grimm's two remarkable essays on *Die Venus von Milo* and *Rafael und Michel Angelo*; and several other works by modern and contemporary authors of the first rank.

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